

A Well-Balanced Diet

A well-balanced diet includes seven elements that work together to satisfy your body's needs for calories and essential nutrients. They are: Water, Carbohydrates, Protein, Vitamins, Minerals, Electrolytes, and Fat. Most foods have a combination of these elements.

<i>Food</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Water	Maintains ability to deliver energy and oxygen to working muscles; maintains body temperature	6-8 glasses/day
Carbohydrates	Provides energy to the body	50-55% of total calories (or more if you're exercising an hour or more each day)
Protein	Builds, repairs and maintains body tissues	15% of total calories
Vitamins	Helps regulate the body's chemical reactions	100% of USRDA*
Minerals	Forms structures of the body and regulates body processes	100% of USRDA*
Electrolytes	Helps maintain fluid balance	Sodium – no more than 2400 mg per day; Potassium – eat lots of fruits & vegetables
Fat	Provides a long-term source of energy	Total fat intake should be no more than 30% of total calories: <i>Saturated</i> fat – no more than 8-10% <i>Polyunsaturated</i> fat – up to 10% <i>Monounsaturated</i> fat – between 10-15%

*The United States Recommended Daily Allowances are based on the RDA that meet the known nutrient needs of almost all healthy people. The USRDA are listed on food labels. They are a standard for nutrient intake based on the population group with the highest RDA for that nutrient.

Adapted from the American Heart Association pamphlet, Nutrition for Fitness, No. 51-1068, 11-96, 96 10 08 E

The primary dietary concern for Americans should be the consumption of too many calories, and particularly, too much fat. While overall calorie intake vs. calorie output results in weight gain or loss, fat calories are simply easier to store as body fat.

Fat:	1 gram = 9 cal
Carbohydrates:	1 gram = 4 cal
Protein:	1 gram = 4 cal
Alcohol:	1 gram = 7 cal